

Port Hills Fires - 2017 Operational Action Plan

He anga whakamua – to move forward positively

Date: 03/11/2017



Action Plan to address the recommendations of the AFAC Independent Operational Review

Port Hills fires, February 2017

Findings and commitment

Mā te rongō ka mōhio - Through perception comes awareness
Mā te mōhio ka mārama - Through awareness comes understanding
Mā te mārama ka matau - Through understanding comes knowledge
Mā te matau ka ora - Through knowledge comes well being

Tihei Mauriora!

Tēnā koutou katoa

On behalf of Fire and Emergency New Zealand I want to acknowledge the loss of helicopter pilot, Steve Askin who lost his life in the line of duty during the Port Hills fires. Steve, his family and colleagues have consistently been in our thoughts as we have reflected on the review and developed this Action Plan.

We also particularly acknowledge those Christchurch residents who lost their homes and had damage to their properties as the fires swept through. It is a priority for us that we learn lessons from their experiences.

This was a challenging situation and I thank and acknowledge the firefighters, emergency responders, support personnel and community volunteers who gave their all.

The legacy of the Port Hills fires will define our new organisation, we will:

- always work, think and move as one, we will be interwoven at all times
- learn and keep learning
- always put people before property
- be accountable and apologise when we are wrong.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand fully accepts the recommendations of the AFAC independent Operational Review of the 2017 Port Hills fires (the Review) and we undertake to fully implement the recommendations. This Action Plan outlines a summary of the preliminary actions that we will take in response to the Review and from our own learnings.

This Action Plan sets out the key areas for attention that we have identified. These include immediate actions for the upcoming fire season, on the Port Hills and in other high-risk locations across the country, and actions at a national level. Other actions are longer-term, informing how we will build our new organisation over time.

The Action Plan has three key focus areas:

- Improved interoperability.
- Community at the centre.
- Safety as a priority.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand is committed to learning from our experience of the Port Hills fires, and alongside National Commander Urban Paul McGill, and National Manager Rural Kevin O'Connor, I will be personally overseeing the implementation of recommendations and will in November make a recommendation to my Board to put together an independent oversight group to support me to do this. Fire and Emergency New Zealand will be reporting our progress against these recommendations every six months (as a minimum) until I and the independent oversight group are comfortable.

Rhys Jones
Chief Executive,
Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Areas of focus

Improved interoperability

The establishment of Fire and Emergency New Zealand on 1 July 2017 was a significant step towards improved interoperability between urban and rural firefighters, bringing them together in one organisation under one piece of legislation. While work to gradually integrate their functions into one organisation will be ongoing over the next three years, urban and rural firefighters now operate under the same interim command and control structure and progress has also been made in working more closely together through joint planning and training. This has included our first joint-deployment of urban and rural firefighters to Canada to grow experience of managing major wildfires.

Further steps to improve interoperability and incident management will include:

- Adopting a single incident management system with the same supporting structures, roles and terminology.
- Training our personnel to use the single incident management system and make this training available to other emergency sector agencies.
- Undertaking rural and urban wildfire planning exercises within the fire season this year, in all regions, with an after action review reported nationally.
- Deployment of dedicated personnel to cover intelligence gathering and incident overview.
- Undertaking additional readiness measures for high wildfire risk areas across the country.
- Improving incident management through a common incident management system for Fire and Emergency New Zealand.
- Training on the incident management system to include ourselves, our personnel and other emergency services personnel.

Community at the centre

Fire and Emergency New Zealand is committed to doing more to help reduce the risks to people and property. Our new organisation will create new ways for the community to advise us of local risks and needs, including through Local Advisory Committees (LACs), and other formal and informal relationships.

We want to better understand and communicate risk and risk ownership, to guide and support communities with fire risk reduction and prevention activities. We will also work with communities to provide more education on the use of fire as a land management tool. Plans are now underway to develop risk tools using a community-based approach, and to design reduction and prevention systems that are easy to understand and use. We will strengthen our leadership role in risk reduction across the sector so that we are better equipped to support communities. This includes continuing to influence building standards, and we will be advising on land use considerations in areas where an increased risk of wildfires is predicted. We will:

- engage with community representatives and residents in Canterbury and other high risk areas to identify the best way to engage with residents to prepare for the fire season and to understand communication needs during a fire
- refresh current fire plans in accordance with the new legislation
- implement a short term public information management strategy for incidents, in coordination with other agencies
- ensure that in the long term we have a single point of information, to ensure everyone has access to the right information in a timely manner.

Safety as a priority

The safety of the public and our people is paramount. As part of ongoing work to build Fire and Emergency New Zealand, we are in the process of designing and implementing a new safety, health and wellbeing system to meet the broader range and spread of risks we face. We will:

- provide refresher briefings for operational personnel in wildfire behaviour and risk management by the end of 2017
- begin a refreshed training programme on safety, health and wellbeing, including case studies based on the Port Hills fires over the next 12-18 months, and integrating the new safety, health and wellbeing system into our incident management system and team processes over the next two years.

Next steps

We are committed to a robust and transparent approach. Working with communities and across the emergency sector we will implement the actions set out in this document. We will:

- engage with the affected communities in the Port Hills on the Action Plan by the end of January 2018
- discuss the Action Plan with our partners across the emergency sector, and inform and coordinate on matters that affect them
- establish governance and management arrangements to actively monitor and manage the implementation of the Action Plan
- publicly report progress against the Action Plan on our website every six months.

Appendix One

Action Plan to address the recommendations in the AFAC Independent Operational Review recommendations

This Action Plan will be monitored and managed by our Organisational Leadership Team, with governance oversight by the National Commander Urban, National Manager Rural, Director of the Office of the Chief Executive and the Integration Programme Director.

Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
Review Recommendation 1			
Fire and Emergency New Zealand adopts a single doctrine, the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS), for incident management. That the new organisation use this doctrine to train/exercise and develop people.			
1.1	We will conduct joint wildfire exercises (table top or in-field) with rural and urban personnel in the regions to reinforce the way we want to work as an integrated team.	Within each region's fire season ¹ and annually thereafter	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
1.2	We will issue a joint statement to all operational personnel, to reinforce our focus on working together.	November 2017	National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural.
1.3	We will contact other agencies (particularly Civil Defence and Police) to indicate that a move to AIIMS is being considered.	December 2017	Chief Executive, National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural.
1.4	We will roll out enhanced Command and Control training.	To be confirmed – probable pilot before the end of the year	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
1.5	We will conduct Port Hills review sessions with regional leadership teams, reinforce key messages and agree on specific local actions to be taken in each region.	December 2017	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
1.6	We will train relevant Fire and Emergency personnel and other agencies on incident management system (AIIMS if adopted).	December 2017 for regional managers, Rollout January 2018 – June 2020	Director Training

¹ Defined as the change in the weather patterns that creates more fires. Varies by region but is generally December.

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Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
1.7	We will design a national and regional incident management team model, including joint rural and urban teams, involve other agencies, and review procedures for National Coordination Centre/Regional Coordination Centres.	Within 3 – 6 months	National Manager Rural Operations, National Operations Manager, Target Operating Model Workstream Lead ² and Safety Health and Wellbeing Workstream Lead
1.8	We will brief other agencies in the emergency sector, community and Iwi on how our new organisation will operate during the fire season.	December 2017	National Manager Rural Operations/ National Operations Manager
1.9	We will engage in discussions with other agencies about AIIMS, to help us decide how we will maintain interoperability with the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS).	Following decision, if required	National Manager Rural Operations/ National Operations Manager
1.10	We will incorporate incident management doctrine capability into the new operating model.	November 2018	Target Operating Model Workstream Lead
1.11	We will work with partner agencies to define and agree the transition from response to recovery in large incidents.	November 2018	Leadership Across the Sector Workstream Lead
Review Recommendation 2			
Fire and Emergency New Zealand along with other agencies who also work in New Zealand communities, implements an annual exercise programme to ensure that personnel involved in IMTs fully understand their roles and can operate at a high level of competency.			
	See actions under Recommendation 1.		
Review Recommendation 3			
A Community Based Wildfire Risk assessment methodology be developed and implemented along the process of the previously prepared Strategic Tactical Fire Management Planning (STFMP).			
3.1	We will develop risk tools with a community-based approach including wildfire threat analysis and community-based fire management, and set up Local Advisory Committees (LACs).	November 2018	Resilient Communities Workstream Lead/Manager Rural Fire/National Risk Reduction Manager

² Workstream Leads are responsible for managing projects within the Fire and Emergency NZ Integration Programme

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Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
3.2	We will use the LAC trial in Hawke's Bay to learn from community-based risk approaches and trial community engagement model with AM/PRFO.	September 2018	Resilient Communities Workstream Lead
3.3	We will identify higher risk areas within the regions, that could benefit from a community-based risk approach.	May 2018	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
3.4	We will ensure the Target Operating Model has a strong emphasis on reduction.	November 2018	Target Operating Model Workstream Lead
Review Recommendation 4			
Fire and Emergency New Zealand develops a genuine community engagement model to implement planning strategies including reduction, readiness, response and recovery.			
4.1	We will meet with the affected residents of Christchurch and Selwyn, Ngai Tahu and community representatives to discuss the best ways to engage this community to prepare for the fire season.	November 2017	Regional Managers
4.2	We will engage with community representatives, Iwi and residents in Canterbury and other high-risk areas on the best way to engage with residents in preparation for the fire season and to understand communication needs during a fire.	December 2017	Regional Managers
4.3	See Actions under Recommendation 2.		
Review Recommendation 5			
Current fire plans be reviewed and aligned with new Fire and Emergency New Zealand legislation			
5.1	We will refresh current fire plans to make them compliant with Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act.	December 2017	Regional Managers, Rural and Principal Rural Fire Officers
5.2	We will design Fire Plans to evolve into Local Plans (that also roll up to Regional and National Plans).	November 2019	Resilient Communities Workstream Lead

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Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
Review Recommendation 6			
A public warning system be developed as the single source of the truth for all incidents and that this system be supported with a comprehensive warning/advisory system and public information strategy			
6.1	We will investigate how to provide better warning information online, including research into Civil Defence text warning system and its use for wildfires.	December 2017	National Communications Manager/ National Operations Manager
6.2	We will develop a short-term public information strategy (including where Fire and Emergency will lead, and where Fire and Emergency will support others) and identify opportunities to improve public information management (PIM).	December 2017	National Communications Manager/ National Operations Manager/ National Manager Rural Operations/ Fire Region Manager, Region 4/Regional Manager Rural
6.3	Along with other agencies, we will design a national strategy and framework for public information management.	Over the next 12 – 18 months	National Communications Manager and Director Training
Review Recommendation 7			
Predictive services be utilised to define strategic management, consequence management, and options analysis for both incident and community advisories.			
7.1	We will issue a joint statement to operational personnel (refer 1.2 above) on the use of a “critical friend” to support the Incident Controller (IC) in large incidents.	November 2017	National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural
7.2	We will deliver a predictive services refresher and conduct regional training/briefing, and introduce a checklist.	December 2017	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
7.3	We will introduce a predictive services working group to develop recommendations for improved practice.	May 2019	Manager Rural Fire/Regional Manager Rural
7.4	We will review training programmes for National and Regional Incident Management Teams (IMTs).	November 2018	Director Training
7.5	We will introduce a refreshed annual training programme with intensive exercises for IMTs (National and Regional).	May 2019	Director Training

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Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
Recommendation 8			
In the developing stages of the fire, complete a risk assessment (with partner agencies) that profiles initial attack, values at risk, monitoring and patrol requirements as well as community expectations.			
	See actions under Recommendation 6.		
Review Recommendation 9			
All future traffic cordons be managed as a functional sector under the Incident Controller.			
9.1	We will prepare guidance for Fire and Emergency IMTs on the use of cordons (before a Civil Defence emergency is declared).	December 2017	National Operations Manager/ National Manager Rural Operations
9.2	We will prepare joint guidance on the use of cordons after a Civil Defence emergency is declared and work closely with agencies with authority.	May 2019	National Operations Manager/ National Manager Rural Operations
9.3	We will conduct regional refreshers on the use of cordons.	December 2017	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)
Review Recommendation 10			
All intelligence relevant to the operation and planning functions of the fire be routed through a single point to assure relevant and timely distribution of that information within the Incident Control Point (ICP).			
10.1	We will conduct joint "Tactical Command" training for Region Managers, Area and Assistant Area Managers/Principal and Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officers (AMs, AAMs/PRFOs, DPRFOs) (Senior Officers).	6 months for Regional Managers October 2018 for AMs, AAMs/PRFOs, DPRFOs course	Director Training
10.2	We will develop Leadership Programmes that will embed behaviour changes.	June 2019	Director Training
10.3	We will issue a joint statement (refer 1.2 above) about routing intelligence through a single point.	November 2017	National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural
10.4	We will conduct joint exercises including Local Coordination Centres (LCCs)/Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) facilities, Communication Centres (ComCen), field observers and incident ground radios, and ICP locations for the fire season.	Within each region's fire season	Regional Managers (Fire Region Managers/Regional Managers Rural)

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Number	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
10.5	Incident Management system training will be provided to reinforce key concepts, including common language.	Rollout January 2018 –June 2020	Director Training
10.6	RMRs and PRFOs will visit ComCen for familiarisation.	Within each region’s fire season	National ComCen & Medical Response Manager/National Operations Manager
10.7	We will schedule leaders (AAMs/DPRFOs and above) to take part in overseas deployments as active members of IMTs.	From May 2018 to November 2018	Director Training/National Operations Manager/National Manager Rural Operations
10.8	We will rollout dual band radios to rural to improve interoperability and investigate adding IMT infrastructure in fire stations with a high wildfire risk.	November 2018	Director ICT
Review Recommendation 11			
A single process be adopted and implemented for incident or ‘near miss’ reporting, which includes reporting and monitoring of actions and outcomes.			
11.1	We will issue a joint statement (refer 1.2 above) with unions and associations on safety, health and wellbeing	November 2017	National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural
11.2	We will introduce a new Safety, Health & Wellbeing IT based system, including rollout of guidance and training.	May 2018	Director People and Capability and Safety, Health and Wellbeing Workstream Lead, Director ICT and Infrastructure and Technology Workstream Lead
11.3	We will develop case studies of good and bad practice to share with operational personnel.	December 2018	Director Training
11.4	We will educate operational personnel on safety, including wildfire behaviour and risk management.	In each region’s fire season (priority areas), 12 months for full rollout	Director Training
Review Recommendation 12			
Fire and Emergency New Zealand develops and implements a comprehensive and measurable plan to put these recommendations in place.			
12.1	This plan is the start of Fire and Emergency New Zealand responding to this recommendation	Ongoing	

